

New India

— FORTNIGHTLY —

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FOUR ANNAS

VAISAKH

The Great Festival of Vaisakh*, wonderfully commemorating the birth, the attainment of Buddhahood, and the departure from the physical body of the Lord Buddha, reminds us here in India that over twenty-five centuries ago the Flower of Earth's Humanity still further sanctified this already sacred soil by winning Freedom from all bondage of the flesh, from all human fetters. The greatest Freedom ever achieved in the history of the world, the Freedom most vital to the world, was then achieved by a Son of India on Indian soil, and by that glorious action, India became dedicated to the attainment of her own Freedom; her feet were set upon the road which leads to Liberty; the Spirit of Freedom was set free to stir this Motherland and her many daughter lands to enter into that Freedom destined to them aforesaid.

Twenty-five centuries have passed; how do we stand to-day? How far have we, has India, travelled on the road to Liberty, spiritual first and then physical? How far have we taken to heart and reproduced in action the magnificent example lived that we might follow it? Where is Freedom today? Is it in our thoughts? Is it in our emotions? Is it in our actions? Is it in our speech? Be India free or bond, can every son and daughter of India yield heart-felt, thankful assent to the questions: Are you free? Is Freedom abroad? Is the Indian home the abode of Freedom? Is there Freedom for the aged, for father and mother, for children, for those who serve, for the members of the family belonging to sub-human kingdoms? Are all free to grow to the measure of their own respective statures? Are all free to be happy, free to be glad to live, free to rejoice in the comradeship of those around them, free to choose their own pathways in life? For such is true Freedom—Freedom to grow unfettered; Freedom to be happy; Freedom to live rejoicing in the comradeship of fellow-travellers on the pathway of life. Such Freedom is the Freedom that subordinates the smaller interests to larger, that lives to give rather than to take. Such is the Freedom that endures; all other Freedom is tyranny masquerading as Freedom, tyrannising as much over the individual who possesses it as over those who are subject to it. He who denies it suffers more degradation than he who suffers from the denial.

What Freedom is there in India? What Freedom is there in the Indian home? What Freedom have the women of India? What Freedom do the children of India enjoy? What is the Freedom of the poor? Of what nature is the Freedom of the aged? Does custom tyrannise and deny Freedom? Do traditions

tyrannise and deny Freedom? Does public opinion tyrannise and deny Freedom? Do forms and ceremonies tyrannise and deny Freedom? Freedom may live where customs give ease and never oppress; where traditions inspire and do not imprison; where public opinion sets high the standard of living and does not degrade life to a mere state of overt conformity with senseless and unreal rules. But where these become instruments of oppression and weapons of pride, no Freedom is.

What Freedom is there in India? We know that for the moment she lives but as she is bidden to live. We know that Freedom in every part of India depends to no small degree upon the achievement of National Freedom. But we may well ask ourselves the question, as to how far we are achieving Freedom for every part of Indian life, as we are working for Freedom in the larger life of the Nation as a whole.

We have ever insisted upon a great National stirring to Freedom, a great National organising for Freedom. We have ever called upon every single individual to bestir himself in his country's cause. India must arise as one single individual, and march irresistibly to her Freedom. But no less insistently do we declare that side by side with National stirring to the Freedom of India as a whole, there must be individual stirring to purge the Motherland in every part of her home life of all that impose slavery upon any son or daughter, be the slavery personal or conventional. To this end the life of the Lord Buddha offers us, one and all, a marvellous example and inspiration. Alone He challenged the conventional, the customary, the traditional. He brushed aside phrases and formulæ. He refused doctrines and man-made spiritual itineraries, presented to Him for acceptance as truth. He must know for Himself. His conclusions are before us in the Four Noble Truths and in the Noble Eightfold Path. His life is before us to bear witness to the illimitable glory of the individual, the free search for, and discovery of Truth. What lesson are we individually learning from this unexampled life? Even if we prefer our fetters, at least do we impose none upon others? Burning with enthusiasm for the Freedom of our country, do we give Freedom to those dependent upon us, as we demand it from those who are to us as we may be to many around us? Are we tyrants? Do we make slaves of those who depend upon us? Do we force them to subscribe to our standards? Do we confine their growth to our own distorted growth? If we would make India free, first must we give the Freedom which lies in our power to give.

*This festival occurs this year on the Full-moon day, 5th May.

Fathers of homes must confer Freedom upon the members of the home, so that all are happy, so that all may feel free to grow, recognising such restraint as may exist to be the protection of Freedom from degeneration into licence, to be the power whereby Freedom becomes ordered Freedom. We must goad into rigorous searching of ourselves and of our modes of living to discover where fetters remain, where tyranny en-

dures, where oppression, whether in the name of caste, of religion, of custom or public opinion, still holds sway. India may gain the outer forms of Freedom, but little Freedom will she have until her sons and daughters are as free from the tyrannies within as they may beome free without, for indeed are the tyrannies within infinitely more monstrous than those without, more dangerous, far more difficult to defeat.—NEW INDIA.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FREEDOM

BY SIDNEY A. COOK

[From a talk to the students of the Hindu College at Masulipatam]

India stands at another crucial point in her long history. She is about to become a modern nation, already she is engaged in social experimentation in accord with the modern trend.

India as a nation has a rich cultural heritage, a tradition of splendid ideals. These are now to be implemented through new channels. Mr. Asaf Ali, India's first ambassador to Washington, is symbol of her new and growing responsibility to make this heritage felt in international relationships to the benefit of the world. In fact India is now to be tested as to the reality and value of her ideals. President Truman in welcoming the new ambassador referred to the occasion as an historic one since India now had a representation as a free nation.

It was Dr. Annie Besant who in modern times first gave real impetus to the revival of India's national spirit and ancient greatness. In establishing the Central Hindu College she commenced the training of the Indians to be truly representative of India's ideals in the political and educational fields. If she were here today she would still urge India to hold fast to these ancient ideals, but to be ready to discard or amend the ancient forms to meet the needs and responsibilities of a new national and international status.

India must not too readily let go the associations that have contributed to her power to take over her new responsibility. The last one hundred and fifty years have been a preparatory period necessary to India's transition. That period is but a moment in India's magnificent history, a moment only in comparison with India's long destiny in freedom. It can be a glorious destiny.

One hundred and fifty years ago India could not have done what can be done now. So, hold no unfriendly feeling, no unkindly thought. Those years were far from perfect but in that period India's people

have evolved new powers and all other nations have progressed in outlook with them. If at one time India's interests seem to have been given little consideration, remember that today there is evidence of good faith and friendship. To those who keep in touch with English opinion as well as with English governmental policy this faith and friendship have been evident for a decade at least. The England of today is not the England of even a quarter century ago.

When Dr. Besant aroused the Indian nation, when she trained and educated India's young men in political ideals and methods, it was that their country might assume an honoured place among the nations. Many in England have done no less to arouse England herself to aid India to take the honoured place.

So, students of India, look to your great traditions and ideals; look with friendship, if not with unqualified approval upon your recent association. It was a necessary part, an important contribution in your arrival at this great moment in your history. Do not too readily exchange proven friendship for the new and the untried among relationships. Do not commence your new national and international responsibility in bitterness and recrimination. Above all do not stain your new beginning with excesses among yourselves. Remember the words of Edmund Brooke. "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to the disposition to put chains on their appetites. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate habits cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

Dr. Besant herself expressed the same thought. "Liberty is a great celestial Goddess, strong, beneficent and austere and she can never descend upon a nation by the shouting of crowds, nor by the arguments of unbridled passion, nor by the hatred of class against class.... Self-control is the foundation on which alone freedom can be built."

India : New Phase

The following interesting editorial appears in a recent issue of the *Daily Herald* of London:

The British Cabinet has made many appeals to the Indian Parties to sink their differences and concentrate on preparing to exercise that right of self-government which they have demanded for so long.

Nor has British action been confined to making appeals. Since it came to power the Labour Government has been tireless in attempts at mediation and in suggesting methods by which the transfer of power to responsible and representative Indian hands might be expedited....

The British Government has announced another bold move in the hope of ending the deadlock.

"His Majesty's Government," says the announcement, "wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948".

If by that date a constitution, devised by a fully representative Assembly, is not ready, the British Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over "in the best interests of the Indian people." A decision will be made whether to transfer the powers as a whole to "some form of central government" or to entrust them in some areas to the provincial administrations.

It is to be hoped that this declaration will persuade the Indian leaders to face their responsibilities with a new sense of urgency and realism.

To the rest of the world it will be a final proof of the fact that the British Government is sincere in its desire to see India ruled by Indians and does not, as is sometimes suggested, derive secret satisfaction from the communal quarrels which are delaying the transfer. The expression of friendship for the people of India with which the declaration ends will be warmly applauded by the British nation.

Let us remember that which we too often forget, that the foreigner is here under the Great Law, the Law of Equilibrium, imposing suffering for our past sins, making us untouchable as we made those we conquered untouchable. It was necessary for the paying of the debt we owed to the Good Law, that the foreigner should be put in the place of apparent, though not real, superiority.

That is over. His work is done. Equal comradeship with him is to begin if he will ; let that not be made impossible from our side by acts of enmity. We are claiming our rights. We shall have them. But as every wrong done to us is the outcome of our own past, as every blow we have suffered was the rebound of our own weapon, let us claim the privilege that belongs alone to the injured, to close the long

account of mutual revenges, by pronouncing the magic word : "We forgive."

NEW INDIA has been revived to begin India's future work, a work wide as the world, sublime as the star-studded sky, universal as the Brotherhood of all that lives. In this there can be no room for hatred ; we cast it behind us into the ocean of forgetfulness. "The Power that makes for Righteousness" is behind us ; we forgive as we ask for forgiveness. Shall we not say : "Father, forgive us both, for we knew not what we did." Let us meet intolerance with Tolerance, injury with Pardon, hatred with Love. Unless all the lessons of our Rishis are false, we must prevail. The Charioteer on Kurukshetra carried no weapon ; but where He was, there was Victory.

—NEW INDIA.

INDIAN ART THROUGH THE AGES

II. Its Canons*

BY PROF. V. N. BHUSHAN

The marvellous expressions of our illustrious ancestors, in paint and stone,—were they mere childish and sentimental effusions ? Or, were they immortal longings caught into form, to colour and cadence attuned ? Were the artists learned craftsmen, or mere idlers wandering by high mountain ridges and lone sea-breakers ?

Bequeathed tradition, as well as chronicled history, bear ample testimony to the copious authoritative texts that existed in the past to guide the *siddha-hastas*. Not only are minute references attesting to the value of Art found in the works of famous scholars and poets like Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Somadeva, Dhaneśwara, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the several Buddhist *Jataka* stories, the Jain *Kalpa Sutra*, and the *Aine-Akbari*, but specific *Silpa-sutras* and *Alankara shastras* also were in vogue. One *sutrarakar* says :—

*Yadha sumeru pravaro naganam,
Yadhandajanam garuda pradhanam,
Yadha naranam pravarah kshitisah,
Tadah kalana mih chitrakalpah.*

Meru among the mountains, *garuda* among the birds, the king among mortals, and painting among fine arts are supreme. Another celebrity declares ;

*Dhyana yogasya sansiddhau pratima lakshanam smritam,
Pratima karako marthyo yadha dhyana-ratho bhaveth,
Tadha nanyena margena pratyakshenapi khalu,
Devanam pratibimbani kurya chhreya skara-incha,
Swargyani manavadina maswargyanyu subhaincha,
Ahi sreyaskaram nrunam deva vilamba lakshanam,
Salakshanam martyabimbau nahi sreyaskaram sada!*

The representation of the Divine in Art should be the highest motive of the artist. A crude image of God is to be preferred to the perfect portrait of a man.

Yet another authority lays down the essentials of artistic creation thus :

*Rupa bhedah pramanani,
bhava lavanya prayojanam,
Sadrusyam varnika bhanganau,
miti chitram shadangakam.*

He talks of the distinction of form, the arrangement of line and mass design, harmony, proportion and perspective, the emotion or aesthetic feeling expressed by the form, the seeking of beauty and charm for the satisfaction of the aesthetic spirit, the truth of the form and finally, the wave-flow of colour.

And so on, rules were laid down concerning themes and technique, *rasas*, and *ragas*, poses and pigments, moods and *mudras*, the brush and the chisel, and in some instances, about the intellectual equipment of the artist.

From these meagre yet not inadequate notes, it is not difficult to conclude that Art in ancient India was considered a holy vocation and pursued as a sacred science. In *Chitra-Sutra*, Markandeya speaks of the superiority of Art which vouchsafes the four *puru-shardhas* :

*Kalanam pravaram chitram
Dharmardha kama mokshadam,
Mangalyam pradhanam eythath
Girhae yatra pratishtitham.*

In the vast Sanskrit Literature there is almost no work which does not allude to art. The various *darsanas*, *dharma shastras* and dramas—all pay their respectful homage to Art. Think of the great sage Narayana etching on earth the figure of *Urvashi* ; of *Dushyanta* drawing the image of *Sakuntala* to enliven his reminiscent moods ; of *Sagarika* painting her royal lover *Vatsa Raja* ; of *Damayanti* depicting in colours the form of her dream-lord, *Nala* ;—think of all these ; and think, too, of the devout and patient *silpis* and *sadhus* chiselling, carving, painting, with a sacredness of outlook and singleness of purpose. Look back through the dim vista of centuries and conjure up before your mind's eye the meridian of Indian art. Pause and ponder, reflect and revere.

It will not be out of place here to note in what unique honour artists were held in ancient India. In this materialistic work-a-day world of ours, we look upon the artist either as the idle worker of an empty day or as a commercial man out to make a merchandise of his craft of make-believe. It was not so in ancient times when Art was commended as a source of spiritual and religious strength, as a help-mate of man in his quest for *Satyam*, *Sivam* and *Sundaram*.

He is the artist who, endowed with imaginative faculty, revels in the golden realms of the Unseen, and reveals to us glimpses of the great Beyond. His eye, like the sun, is ever bright, and pierces to the darkest corners of Creation, and gauges the heights and the depths as well. The purple light of the world melts around his flight of fancy. The altar of the Fire-God is his studio ; his palette is the lotus-flower of *Lakshmi* ; his dreams are the chariot-steeds of the *Aswins* ; his canvas is the sky ; he rides on the wings of the clouds ; frolics with the wind-babies ; gambols with the foam-flakes ; and his

*The first instalment of this article, exclusive to NEW INDIA, appeared in our issue of April 15, 1947.

The Grand Appeal

We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and the greatest misery to innocent people, irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims.

We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder ; but also to avoid both in speech and writing, any words which might be construed as an incitement to such acts.

Sd/- M. A. JINNAH
15. 4. 47.

Sd/- M. K. GANDHI

New India

Benares City

1 May 1947

*It may make a difference to all eternity
whether we do right or wrong today.*

—JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

The Neo-Pakistan

The Congress resolution on the partition of the Punjab, implying also the partition of Bengal on a similar basis, has created a great flutter in the dovetails of the Muslim League. The Bengal Premier, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy, has now become a great exponent of United Bengal although he still stands for a divided India.

A press agency report says that the Bengal Muslim Leaguers have informed Mr. Jinnah that they do not want Pakistan if it is to be secured by partitioning Bengal. Malik Firoz Khan Noon, perhaps the most vociferous advocate of Pakistan, has offered an olive branch of peace and amity to the Sikhs of the Punjab, to come together to rule over the destinies of that province, leaving out the Hindus to shift for themselves. The partition of the Punjab and Bengal have evidently made the Muslim Leaguers conscious of the fact that it is better to give up the dream of Pakistan if it means but ruling over deserts and barren lands.

Within the so-called Pakistan provinces there seems to be distrust of each other, for another press agency reports that Sind Muslim Leaguers do not want to be dominated by the Punjab which will have larger number of votes in Section B of the Constituent Assembly than other units of the same Section. And so we are now told that the "Sovereign State of Pakistan" will not be a Federation but a Confederation in which certain Muslim majority areas will be loosely brought together. But this loose Confederation is to be called by the awe-inspiring name of the "Commonwealth of Pakistan" to be organized on the lines of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Muslim States of India according to this plan will be free to join this Confederation, and such confederating units will have the right to secede from the Pakistan Commonwealth. The framers of this plan contend that if such distant places as Canada, Australia and South Africa can remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations, there is nothing strange if the Muslim States join the Pakistan Confederation. Evidently this scheme has been evolved to give an added dignity to Pakistan since partitioned Punjab and Bengal would divest the Pakistan of all its lustre.

Now the framers of the above Neo-Pakistan plan seem to have decided that sovereignty in the Indian States rests with the ruler and not with the people. According to this proposal about ten crores of the

States' peoples must have no voice in deciding their own destinies. It means the Nizam of Hyderabad can decide the future of more than 19 millions of the peoples of Hyderabad State by himself. These large numbers of Hindus who constitute the population of the Hyderabad State would then be transferred like slaves and chattels to the Sovereign State of Pakistan. And they must meekly submit to this fate, for such is the wish of the Ruler.

Mr. Jinnah has always contended that the principles of democracy are alien to the Hindu Race and that the Islamic code is based on highest democratic ideas. It is difficult for us to see democracy where millions of people have no voice in deciding their own future. Such feudalistic notions of state subjects have been discarded long ago and have become matters of remote history. Evidently Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan is to be a feudal state where the people will be treated as slaves and chattels and will, therefore, be denied even the Fundamental Rights of Citizenship. This Neo-Pakistan has given us a glimpse of the pattern on which the Sovereign State of the Muslims will be based.

Mr. Jinnah and his Muslim League must know that they cannot put the clock of progress back. Those who tried to do this have miserably failed and have been thrown on the dung-heap of history by those very people whom they temporarily put under their heels. In deciding the future of India, it is the people of this land that must be recognised as active agents. If certain large sections of the people in this land, whether in the provinces or in the States, decide to keep themselves out of the Indian Union, they are welcome to do so. No authority can compel them to remain within the Union. Similarly if certain other sections of the people, like the Hindus of Western Bengal, or the Hindus and Sikhs of the Eastern Punjab, or the Muslims of the North-Western Frontier or the peoples of Indian States decide to remain within the Indian Union, no power on earth can transfer them to any other Political Authority, whether a Federation or a Confederation or a Commonwealth.

The Sovereignty of India resides in the Indian people and it is for the people to decide what shall be the future Constitution of this Land.—ROHIT MEHTA.

The Great Law

Let us fix our thoughts on our goal—a Free United India. It is less necessary now to lay stress on past cases of foreign misrule than to emphasise the need for unity among ourselves, and for the leaders to set the example, by forgetting all real or imagined wrongs and by making that forgetfulness the path to Unity. We must not exaggerate any past or present mistakes of our opponents, or allow our passionate love for India to distort our judgment, or to express itself in any undignified or ungenerous act. We must be firm, but not provocative. We must state facts, but with dispassionate judgment.

delight, like moonlight, spreads enchantment over all. His touch is thrilling and transcendental. Out of nothing he creates everything. Out of stillness he fashions serenity; on stones he chisels scriptures; in colours he creates cadence; into lines he breathes life. Such is the artist's greatness and glory, and such was he regarded and respected in the India that was.

III. Its Background

Why has Indian Art such an intense religious background, and what is its primary ideal? As Sri Aurobindo has somewhere said: "All Indian Art is a throwing out of self-vision formed by a going within to find out the secret significance of form and appearance, a discovery of the subject in one's deeper self, the giving of soul-form to that vision, and a remoulding of the material and natural shape to express the psychic truth of it with the greatest possible purity and power of outline, and the greatest possible rhythmic unity of significance in all parts of an indivisible artistic whole." Indian Art has always been an expression of the various *rasas* in life. Life itself is a variegated fabric, but the artist is not simply satisfied with this. He penetrates through the veil and discovers the moods of the Creator Himself, and the rhythms that rule the world. And for this adventure of his nothing is more propitious than the twin symbols of Love and Religion—symbols that represent the soul on its onward and upward soaring. The imagery of Love and Religion has a perennial perfection which the more we probe the more we are allured by visions of uncharted worlds. Fresh in their inspiration, fecund in their vitality, irresistible in their appeal—Love and Religion have always been the twin themes of Indian Art, and shall ever be the fountain-sources of all great Art. The Greek and Roman artists, and the Renaissance painters—all sought solace in the themes of Love and Religion. In ancient India, we must remember, Art and Architecture served as channels for the propagation of Faith. Shrines, caves and monolithic columns were made to spread the gospel of God. Both Hindu and Buddhist Art made immense use of symbolism for making teaching concrete to the illiterate. Many of the temples and monasteries were fashioned with five stages and studded with figures of beasts and birds pointing to the philosophic teaching that the "muddy vesture of decay" is in the relation of sheaths of the soul in due order. Thus, the elephants represented the elemental plane, the lions the vital air, the horses the senses, the oxen the mind and the doves knowledge. Besides these symbolic presentations and the figures of the Godhead in His triple aspect of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, several other figures of sages and saints, heroes and devotees, and illustrations from *Puranas*, epics and legends were freely carved and painted, to engender in the minds of the pilgrims a sense of the sublime, a reverence for religion and a love of the lofty. Through these supraphysical psychic vivifications the artists poured forth the

creative urge of infinite energy that pervades this phenomenal world. Whether they be temple towers or *Stupa* sculpture or Moghul minarets or Rajput *ragamalas*, they elevated them to a plane of divine efflorescence. Possessing a synthetic vision of unity of the One in the Many and the Many in the One, they sought to fulfil the exalted spiritual possibilities of man and his aspirations. They were not mere architects and devotees, not mere *silpis* and *sadhus*, but practical *Yoga-silpis* who underwent so many purificatory ceremonies and became perfected in the school of regulated ritualistic performance. Then, like Coramandel pearl-fishers they dived deep into the ocean of Idealism and found out the secret and spell of Beauty and *Bhakti* that revealed to them the Personality that proclaimed: "I am the Splendour of the splendid things." As builders, they had not merely to master the *silpa shastras*, but to understand the *vedas* and undergo a curriculum of *yogic* discipline that would endow them with power of constructional science—says the *Manasara*. Thus equipped, they knocked at the portals of Form, beheld the radiance of hidden things through their intuitive rhythm, and produced freely plastic figurations and colourful paintings. Thus did they attain the august ideal, enunciated by *Vishnu Dharmottara*, namely, "cleansing and curb anxiety, augment good, give high and pure delight, cancel evil of false dreams, please God and conduce *Dharma* and *Moksha*." Thus, interwoven with the very fabric of her spiritual ideology, Art was idealised till it gleamed like an inward light.

Thus, Indian Art with its constant aim of attaining the ideal mated itself with the Highest and the Noblest. It fixed its feet not in the ephemeral but in the eternal, and its gaze on the firmament of fulfilled visions. With "a light that never was on land or sea" gleaming over its brow, it not only illustrated the ideal but interpreted it also. It possessed the two-fold capacity of commanding the motive and securing the process. Is not idealism, with its soul-illumination and will-energy, the *primum mobile* of existence? In the perpetual panorama of the All-Transcendental, does not infinite Ideality embrace the Immeasurable Personality? Truth as the sentiment of Being, Goodness as the spirit of life, and Beauty as a joy forever, are among the primal dreams of human consciousness, which find perpetual expression in man's endeavours. It was with such sweeping visions that Indian Art flourished.

But it will not suffice for us to gloat over a gleaming past. Modern Indian artists, without being caught in the meshes of western influences, should seek to resuscitate our age-old ideals. May be, new forms and new modes come into being, as indeed they are coming, but the fundamental aim should not be forsaken, the aim, namely, of scattering wide the seeds of Divine inspiration. Art is the *Ananda sethu*, the bridge of joy that God has given to humanity to lead it from the senses to the soul, from darkness to light, from earth to heaven, from death to immortality.

Towards Total Prohibition

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Premier, United Provinces, recently issued the following Message on the eve of the introduction of the first instalment of Prohibition in the United Provinces:

All decent people in our country have always been opposed to the use of alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs. They are always a source of mental and moral degradation. All our religions and also all sections of public opinion regard them as an unmitigated evil. In the case of the poor they inevitably entail a great drain on their limited resources and

not unoften spell the ruin of the entire family. The Congress has accordingly accepted the goal and policy of total prohibition. Certain steps in this direction were taken when we were in office last time, but that policy was reversed when we quitted office about six years ago. We are taking steps to implement it again, and, as the first instalment, total prohibition is going to be introduced in the districts of Budaun, Mainpuri, Etah, Farrukhabad, Sultanpur, Partabgarh and Jaunpur from the 1st of April. Besides, all liquor shops will be brought under State manage-

ment in the Dehra Dun District, all cinema bars will be closed and strict regulation will be introduced in order to restrict its use in the cities of Dehra Dun and Mussoorie. It is the duty of all of us to raise the general moral standard of the country, and especially, to save the poor man from ruin even by legislation, whenever necessary. Compulsion alone cannot, however, ensure the results we desire. Consummation of

the goal can be reached only through voluntary abstinence and this virtue must be developed, as only thus can the evil be finally rooted out. So I appeal to one and all, regardless of differences of caste, creed, political or social opinions, to join hands in this noble task and to assist the Government in all possible ways in their organized campaign against the drink and drug evil.

THE MUSLIM LEAGUE'S CLAIM TO POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

BY DR. SACHCHIDANANDA SINHA

In one of its Resolutions the Muslim League has criticised the Hindu Dharma, philosophy, and specially its caste system, which, they declare, threatens to reduce Muslims, Christians and other minorities to a state of irredeemable helots, both socially and economically. On the other hand, they claim that Islam is a truly democratic religion, while Hinduism is not. How unjust are their criticisms against Hinduism and the caste system and how weak is the League's claim to Political Democracy is clearly explained by Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha in this specially written article.

In a preamble to one of its resolutions the Council of the Muslim League writes: "Whereas in this vast sub-continent of India a hundred million Muslims are the adherents of a faith which regulates every department of their life (educational, social, economic, and political), whose code is not confined merely to spiritual doctrines and tenets, or rituals and ceremonies, and which stands in sharp contrast to the exclusive nature of Hindu dharma and philosophy, which has fostered and maintained for thousands of years a rigid caste system resulting in the degradation of sixty million human beings to the position of untouchables, creation of unnatural barriers between man and man, and super-imposition of social and economic inequalities on a large body of the people of this country, and which threatens to reduce Muslims, Christians, and other minorities to the status of irredeemable helots, socially and economically; and whereas the Hindu caste system is a direct negation of nationalism, equality, democracy and all the noble ideals that Islam stands for..."

It is not necessary to quote further from the resolution nor do I propose to examine the reflections cast on Hindu dharma and philosophy. It should be obvious to the meanest intelligence that a system which has endured for "thousands of years" may well be presumed to possess such wonderful vitality as the result of some innate goodness in its structure, and such inherent characteristics as are conducive to the well-being of society, that it is difficult for any unprejudiced and fair-minded person to accept the League's allegations in regard to it.

While unreservedly accepting much, if not all, that is said in the League's resolution about the social and economic advantages attaching to Quoranic Islam, no well-informed observer of present-day Muslim conditions in India, can accept as correct the proposition that the Indian Mussalmans are either socially or economically more advanced than Hindus of the same or similar stratum in their society. The well-established fact that Jews in Southern India, and Parsees in Western India, had flourished and thrived for centuries, and (in spite of their being in very small number) had not been reduced by the overwhelming mass of Hindus, amongst whom they had lived, "to the status of irredeemable helots, socially and economically," wholly belies the view expressed by the League.

Islam deserves very high praise for its success in elimination of all racial distinctions among its adherents. But while Muslims may justly feel proud of this great achievement of Islam, it is palpably wrong to talk of it as "equality" in the political sense. This

for the obvious reason that Islamic equality is in practice strictly limited to those only who accept its creed. That Islamic equality is consistent with intolerance of other creeds, is attested by the very words of the preamble of the League resolution under discussion; quite apart from the unimpeachable data furnished by history recorded by Muslims themselves in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other languages,

No Political Democracy in Islam

It is generally asserted by members of the Muslim League that Islam is a truly democratic religion, while Hinduism is not. Islam is democratic, as compared with some other religions, in so far as it affects the social relations of its followers; but it is absolutely wrong to assert that at any time during its existence of over thirteen centuries Islam had ever succeeded in evolving a body politic based on principles of political democracy, as that term is understood in Europe and America, since the days of the French revolution, or of the Declaration of American Independence. There was no such thing as the term "political democracy" implies, even during the short period of the rule of the first four Caliphs, to say nothing of its existence at a later stage.

Caste System Saved Indian Civilization

The much-maligned Hindu caste system is not such an unmitigated curse to humanity as it is declared to be in the resolution of the Muslim League. I can quote many competent European writers who formed their opinion of the caste system both as students of that institution and also as administrators after considerable experience of its working; and they all agree that Hindu society and civilization, which had to struggle against many devastating cataclysms, would have gone the way of other ancient civilizations but for the caste system. The famous French missionary, Abbe Dubois, who spent over thirty years in the country (1792-1823), and whose work "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies" is justly regarded a standard authority, writes as follows:—"I believe caste to be in many respects the happiest effort of Hindu legislation. I am persuaded that it is simply and solely due to the distribution of the people into castes that India did not lapse into a state of barbarism, and that she preserved and perfected the arts and sciences of civilization, whilst most other peoples of the earth remained in a state of barbarism. I do not consider caste to be free from many great drawbacks; but I believe that the resulting advantages, in the case of a people constituted like the Hindus, more than outweigh the resulting evils".

As the Abbe points out he did not consider the

caste system "to be free from many great drawbacks," and realizing them fully modern Hindus have not been slow to remove them, to a large extent. But no human system can or should be condemned outright by sensible persons because of its "many great drawbacks," as the caste system had been done in the resolution of the Muslim League. Having quoted from the earliest authoritative European Writer on the subject of caste, I shall now cite the views of the latest unimpeachable authority on the subject—Dr. J. H. Hutton, a renowned anthropologist, and the Census Commissioner of India in 1931. In his latest work—called *Caste in India* (1946), he writes:

"India contains nearly a fifth of the world's population, some 390 millions of people, and being a natural geographical unit there is inevitably much that this great population has in common. At the same time it is composed of all sorts of different elements of great diversity, of different customs, and even different colours. All these varied peoples have been enabled to live together, in conditions of comparative stability, and forming what may be described as a multiple society, by the caste system, which must probably be regarded as having developed as a sort of organic response to the requirements of the particular case".

Dr. Hutton then states: "The view put forward in this volume is that it is caste which has made it possible for both requirements (mentioned above) to be satisfied within a single social system, a system, moreover, which has proved historically to be very stable. A very important function of caste has been to act as a political stabilizer." It was this function, apparently, of the caste system which so moved the admiration of the Abbe Dubois. The admiration of Dubois is not without some justification, and he has not been the only writer to draw attention to the value of caste as a stabiliser of society. At a more recent date Mr. S. C. Hill has taken a similar view. He calls the caste system 'the only social system ever proposed upon a basis stronger than Force; it puts into successful practice the only instance of a scheme of social life which is entirely independent of any form of political government'.

Caste Exists among Indian Muslims

The next point is that Indian Muslims are themselves divided into many definite social grades corresponding to Hindu castes, and that economic inequality amongst them is as great, if not even greater, than that obtaining among Hindus of the same or similar stratum of society. In fact, it had been asserted by competent authorities that in India Islam had not only failed to break up the caste system, but had itself accepted it as its social pattern, and an integral feature of its body politic. This view is confirmed and emphasised both by Sir Edward Gait and Dr. Hutton—both Census Commissioners of India, the former of the Census of 1911, and the latter of that of 1931.

Sir Edward Gait, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, and a leading authority on the subject, writes in the following terms:

"To sum up, it may be said that, though caste is unknown to the Muhammadan religion, it exists in full force amongst many of the Muhammadans of Upper India, and in all parts of the country amongst the functional groups that form the lower strata of the community. The other Indian Muhammadans, though they do not recognize caste, have, nevertheless, been so far influenced by the example of their Hindu neighbours that they have become far more particular about their matrimonial alliances than are their co-religionists elsewhere".

Dr. Hutton also deals with the subject of caste as it obtains in practice amongst the Indian Mussalmans, and writes as follows:—

"Even a change of religion does not destroy the caste system, for Muslims, who do not recognize it as valid, are often found to observe it in practice, and there are many Muslim castes as well as Hindu: and when some reforming body breaks away from Hinduism and repudiates caste, it becomes something very like a new caste of its own".

He gives concrete examples in support of the view expressed by him by stating that "Muslim castes are a familiar phenomenon; Momin or Jolaha, for instance, a caste of Muslim weavers; Lalkhani, a caste of Muslim Rajputs; Goddi, a caste of Muslim graziers; Mirasi, a caste of Muslim minstrels closely akin to the Hindu caste of Dharhi, and so forth. Indeed one Muslim caste, the Turkiya Banjara, has three definite *gotras*, three of which have Muslim names". The facts brought together by Sir Edward Gait and Dr. Hutton are a sad commentary on the declaration of the Muslim League in regard to the system of caste among Hindus.

Such being the facts relating to the caste system, and the operation of its underlying spirit even amongst Indian Muslims, Christians, and some other religious communities in this country, the contention of the Working Committee of the Muslim League, in their resolution, seems to be palpably absurd. The Leaguers seem to forget that they cannot delude the non-League public with a mere repetition of their shibboleths, and slogans, one of which is their declaration that in a system of political democracy, Hindus with their caste system, and "Hindu Dharma and philosophy" will "reduce Muslims, Christians and other minorities to the status of irredeemable helots socially and economically". This picturesquely poetic language will not carry conviction to any reasonable person, who will study the question in the light of the data, facts, and opinions brought together in this article.

Recently in pursuance of the "Democracy unsuited to India" theory of the League, its principal organ in the press wrote as follows; "The Principle of democratic majority cannot work successfully, as between the two major nations constituting the population of this country, without prejudice to the one numerically smaller. Only recently the constitution of the Fourth Republic of France was adopted with a small electoral majority, but it is held valid as having the sanction of the whole people because France does not constitute two nations".

If the rule of simple majority cannot hold good for India, as a whole, it cannot do so, for Bengal or the Punjab either. The same two "nations" that inhabit India inhabit these areas also. It is not surprising, therefore, that the London *Times* (in the course of a recent editorial on the Punjab disturbances of March, 1947) had given a warning to the leaders of the Muslim League, after holding them responsible for "arson and massacre" in the Punjab, in their attempt "to enforce a communal dictatorship by unconstitutional agitation". It significantly adds: "The agitation claims to be based on 'democratic principles'. It is a curious feature of the campaign that a 56 per cent Muslim majority in the province enables it to evoke these principles, while it fiercely controverts them in other parts of India". This is a conclusive clincher to the pretensions of the League.

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A New Step toward Brotherhood

Someone says, "Let me make the songs of the people and you may make the laws," or words to that effect. For many years the British National Anthem has been a source of considerable worry to many people who intensely disliked its militaristic tone, particularly in the second verse where the "Knavish tricks" and the "politics" of the foreign nations are severely denounced. This has now been changed, to the great benefit, we may hope, of the growth of the spirit of world brotherhood among the British people. The new version of the second stanza which, by order of the King, replaces the old extremely 'nationalistic' one, was first sung at a recent service of intercession for the cause of the United Nations in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. It runs:

Not on this land alone—
But be God's mercies known
From shore to shore.
Lord make the nations see
That men should brothers be,
And form one family
The wide world o'er.

—C J. RYAN

Book Review

The Iniquity of the Punjab League and Its Significance, by C. Parmeswaran. Published by the New World Order Publications, 17, Mohan Lal Road, Lahore. Price Re. 1/-

The recent ministerial crisis and the communal disturbance in the Punjab have brought to a focal point the attention of all India on that Province. It is common knowledge that until the other day when all was peaceful there, it is the agitation and the activities of the All-India League leaders that threw the Punjab into a state of chaos. This booklet is written by a non-partisan, who impartially traces the genesis and growth of the present troubles in the Punjab and tries to point out to the All-India Muslim League the iniquity which, by its starting and continuing an agitation, it was perpetrating against itself more than anyone else. The author considers that "a leadership which works for the preservation and promotion of the deeper interests, moral and secular, of a section of a country's population as the Muslim League claims to do in respect of the Muslim community in India, is not necessarily a disaster or an obstruction to the human unity, well-being and prosperity of the population as a whole. It may even prove to be a powerful agent compelling the prevalence of healthy conditions in the life of the other sections as well." He believes that the Punjab offers a most favourable ground for the successful working of democratic form of Government, as indeed the Coalition Government was till recently. He still considers that it is only the Coalition that will save the Punjab from the curse of communalism. He considers Sir Khizar, the late Premier of the Coalition Government, as ideally suited for the leadership of a united Punjab and appeals to the League to take measures to assist and cooperate with Sir Khizar in the restoration of constitutional government and peace in the Province. In that way, he points out, that "if an appeal to the divine truths and the noble virtues of Islam will have the power to completely avert or considerably limit the extent of the disaster, and turn the Muslim League into a blessing, and not a curse, to the humanity everywhere in India, Islam

will have served its ancient and natural ally, India, well and won for itself the noblest of all successes."

—V.

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